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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ACTION MEMORANDUM

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TO: The Secretary

THROUGH: S/MS - Dr. Marshall Shulman

FROM: EUR - George B. Vest

SUBJECT: ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Issue

Should EUR make a low key approach to the Soviet Embassy on the Raoul Wallenberg case.

Background

Wallenberg was a Swedish diplomat in Budapest during World War II and was instrumental (with U.S. encouragement) in saving the lives of 20,000 Jews. Despite Soviet statements that he died in 1947 in one of their prisons, his case has remained a subject of inquiry for decades.

This week, Wallenberg's half-sister, Mrs. Nina Lagergren, is in Washington to solicit help in seeking clarification of the fate of her half-brother. She met July 17 with Senators Church and Pell and was scheduled to see Stuart Eizenstat that evening. She will also be meeting with NSC and Department officers with the aim of getting the U.S. to raise the issue with the Soviets. She has written the Vice President, whom she met earlier this year in Stockholm, to request an appointment with the President (Tab 1). The Swedish Government has repeatedly asked the Soviets -- as recently as January -- about the case.

You will recall that we considered the possibility of raising the Wallenberg case with the Soviets in Vienna, but you decided against it. To the best of our knowledge,

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RDS-I, 7/18/2009 (Barry, Robert L.)

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we have not raised this case with them before. We do not expect that raising it now will lead the Soviets to change their position, but Wallenberg was on a mission with a mission partly on behalf of the United States, and the information of interest to the Soviets would be welcomed by the U.S. and Swedish public and our Congress. Wallenberg's background is at Tab 2. If you decide that we should raise this with the Soviets, we would coordinate our approach with the Swedish Government.

Recommendation

That you approve a low key approach to the Soviet Embassy on the Wallenberg case.

Approve

✓ 19 JUL 1979

Disapprove

Attachments:

Tab 1 - Letter to the Vice President

Tab 2 - Background on Wallenberg

Drafted: EUR/SOV: JVD ¹⁹ _{Donne, Jr: mth}
7/18/79 22071

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